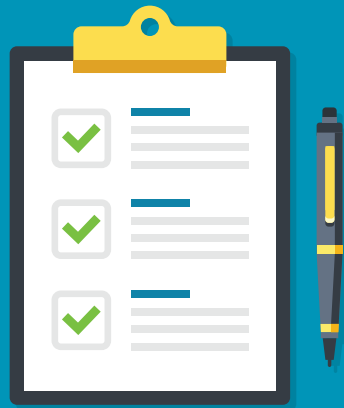




CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist

The atmosphere and physical aspects of the dining room can play a big part in creating a relaxing and enjoyable dining experience in long-term care. Use this checklist to reflect on current practices and learn how to create a welcoming and comfortable dining environment.



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What is CHOICE+

CHOICE+ is an innovative program that aims to improve the mealtime experience for residents in long-term care. It focuses on developing relationship-centred practices and enhancing the dining environment.

The program is made up of six principles:

- C Connecting:** having meaningful conversations and socializing
- H Honouring Dignity:** respecting decisions, choices and preferences
- O Offering Support:** supporting residents based on individual needs
- I Identity:** knowing and accepting residents as unique individuals
- C Creating Opportunities:** supporting active mealtime participation
- E Enjoyment:** creating a warm and welcoming dining environment

To learn more about each of these principles, see the CHOICE+ learning modules: <https://choice.the-ria.ca>



CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist Instructions

What is the CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist?

The CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist (DRC) was created as part of the CHOICE+ program to help team members in long-term care create a comfortable, inviting and enjoyable dining environment. It helps team members reflect on the physical aspects and ambiance of the dining room in which they work, and offers some tips and suggestions to make improvements.

Who should use DRC?

DRC was designed for team members in long-term care (e.g., dietary team members, recreation team members, personal support workers, registered practical nurses, leadership) – essentially any team members that support the dining room.

How to complete DRC:

On DRC, there are four categories (layout, furniture, lighting/sound, and ambiance) each with five to six questions about the dining environment. Team members can complete the entire DRC in one sitting, over a set period of time (e.g., one week), or focus in on one category at a time (e.g., one category/week). Team members should read the questions, reflect on the dining room being assessed or where they most commonly work, and answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Don't worry if there are a number of 'no' responses, these questions were designed with the ideal dining room being the goal.



CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist Instructions

INSTRUCTIONS

How to use DRC to make goals

Once team members have completed DRC, it is important to discuss the exercise as a team. Consider setting a specific meeting time to discuss DRC results or plan to talk about it at an existing meeting, like a huddle or shift change. Ask team members who are comfortable to share their results. For example, what category had the most 'No' responses. Or, if they see any opportunity areas for improvement based on their responses or the tips that are provided. As a team, pick a few opportunity areas and discuss how the team can start working towards them. Together, make a plan and set goals, discuss who needs to be involved and how the team will know when the goal is reached. Neighbourhood teams are encouraged to problem-solve together and find creative solutions that meet the needs of residents. Keeping home management informed on plans and progress is also important as they can provide helpful support. And don't forget to celebrate successes – big or small!

How often should DRC be used?

DRC can be completed as needed, perhaps when a team has decided to make changes to the dining room or when there is a need to refocus on resident mealtime experiences. Completing the checklist more frequently will help to keep dining room goals in mind and make self-reflection a regular exercise.

Please note: DRC is meant to help team members in long-term care reflect on the dining environment and start making goals and action plans to make dining rooms more comfortable and enjoyable. DRC is not an objective measure, but is to be used as a guide and a place to start conversations about improving the dining environment for residents in long-term care.



CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist



Think about the dining room you are interested in assessing. Answer the following questions individually or as a team. The following page provides some ideas to start making changes and improve the dining environment so it is welcoming, comfortable and supports a more enjoyable mealtime experience for residents.

LAYOUT	Yes	No
Can team members easily see each resident from anywhere in the dining room?		
Can team members easily and quickly get to residents who may need assistance if there was an emergency?		
Is it easy to move around in the dining room without running into obstacles or clutter?		
Is there a mix of seating arrangements for residents to choose from? (e.g., some singles, doubles, small and large group seating)		
Is there a place for a more private dining table?		
Are there less than 20 residents in the dining room?		

FURNITURE	Yes	No
Are there adjustable tables?		
Do the plates stand out colour-wise from the placemat or tablecloth?		
Is there a clock on the wall that residents can see?		
Is the menu posted where residents can see?		
Are there decorations (e.g., plants, art work, curtains)?		
Is the furniture similar to what you might have at home?		



CHOICE+ Dining Room Checklist



LIGHTING/SOUND	Yes	No
Is there soft, non-overhead lighting?		
Is there lots of natural light?		
Is there little or no glare on the floor or tables?		
Is there the potential to play music?		
Is there little or no extra noise (e.g. scraping dishes or grinding medications)?		

AMBIANCE	Yes	No
Is the dining room open between meals for resident or family use?		
Can residents access food or beverages during or outside of mealtimes without needing a key or permission?		
Does it smell like food throughout the dining room to signal the beginning of the meal?		
Can residents see outside (e.g. garden) from where they sit?		
Does the dining room feel comfortable and inviting (i.e., not sterile or institutional)?		



CHOICE+

What can you do to improve?

Did you answer “No” more than “Yes”? Consider the tips below to make dining in your home more welcoming, comfortable and enjoyable for residents.

LAYOUT

Rearrange furniture to make it easier to support every resident, and ensure there is enough room for those using walkers or wheel chairs to move around comfortably.

Create options for flexible dining by having tables for individuals, small groups or family-style.

Think about other places in the home where you can have special meals or a change of scenery. If you have a crowded dining room, this can help even if you only do it occasionally.

Clear any obstacles (e.g., empty chairs, extra carts) or clutter out of the dining room.

Fewer people in the dining room allows for a more intimate and personalized dining experience. If you can't reduce the number of people in the dining room, think of ways to create a more intimate environment (e.g. partial room dividers).

FURNITURE

Use adjustable furniture to cater to individual resident needs.

Use homelike furniture and decorations (e.g., plants, artwork picked by residents).

Use tableware (e.g., tablecloths, placemats, centerpieces such as flowers) and utensils (e.g., no plastic) that feel like home.

Use table cloths or placemats that contrast with the dishes to help draw residents' attention to the food on their plate. For example, if you use light coloured plates, pick a tablecloth or placemat that is a dark, rich colour.

Keep table settings simple so the table top isn't over-crowded.

Have a clock in the dining room with the meal times posted.

LIGHTING/SOUND

Play music that residents will like, making sure it isn't too loud. Especially consider those closest to the source of the music.

Make sure the dish cart is out of sight and scraping of plates is done out of the dining room.

Keep the med cart out of site, and try not to grind/distribute medications during the meal.

Identify other sources of extraneous noise and try to eliminate them.

Ensure the lighting is pleasant (not too bright, but not too dim), try bringing in some lamp lighting, and close curtains or blinds if there is a lot of glare from the windows.

AMBIANCE

Make sure the dining room smells like food by preparing some items on the neighbourhood, like baking bread in a bread maker, or putting on a pot of coffee.

Make sure dining room temperature is comfortable. Ask residents if they are too hot/cold.

Turn off the TV during meals and try to encourage conversation.

Make sure every resident has a nice view (e.g., see outside, or beautiful artwork or flowers).

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